

VZCZCXRO8330
RR RUEHCN RUEHGH
DE RUEHHK #2469 1650921
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 140921Z JUN 06
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7270
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA

UNCLAS HONG KONG 002469

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/ANP AND INR/EAP
STATE FOR EAP/EX, EAP/EP TWANG, EAP/CM KBENNETT, GWARD
STATE FOR G/AIAG JLANGE, HFOSTER, RFENDRICK
STATE FOR M/MED ADN M/MEDEX PETER WOOD
HHS FOR OGHA -- STEIGER, ELVANDER, BHAT
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC
USDA FOR DU/US LAMBERT
BEIJING FOR DSELIGSOHN, CSHAPIRO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMED](#) [ECON](#) [KSTH](#) [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [EAGR](#) [HK](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: HONG KONG GOVERNMENT ON SHENZHEN AI CASE

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection (CHP) Senior Medical and Health Officer Dr. Edwin Tsui told Econoff on June 14 that a truck driver traveling through Shenzhen had tested positive for H5N1 avian influenza (AI). Tsui said that hospital authorities had yet to determine if

SIPDIS

the patient had recent, significant contact with poultry. The CHP has sent an expert team to Shenzhen to investigate. Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food Eddy Chan said that the Hong Kong Government would "probably" stop the import of live poultry from Guangdong Province once it receives official confirmation of the H5N1 case from the mainland Ministry of Health. End Summary.

Shenzhen AI Case

¶2. (SBU) CHP Senior Medical and Health Officer Dr. Edwin Tsui told Econoff on June 14 that polymerase-chain-reaction

SIPDIS

(PCR) tests had confirmed the presence of H5N1 in a truck driver who was hospitalized on June 3 when he was traveling through Shenzhen. So far, Shenzhen medical authorities have been unable to communicate with the patient to come up with a definite contact history. All of the epidemiological evidence gathered on the case to this point has originated from the patient's wife. According to her, the patient's only definite contact with poultry was when he shared a chicken dish at a family meal that was prepared from a live chicken that she had bought at a wet market two weeks before his hospitalization. Tsui said that a preliminary look at the patient's work profile does not indicate any regular contact with live poultry. Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food Eddy Chan later indicated, however, that the patient was evidently a frequent visitor to wet markets to meet his daily shopping needs.

¶3. (SBU) Tsui said that the HKG was sending a team of epidemiological experts, including himself, to Shenzhen to directly investigate the situation there. The CHP has activated its enhanced pneumonia surveillance system, under which all Hong Kong hospitals must report any cases of pneumonia-like illnesses involving patients with recent

travel outside of Hong Kong. The case information is then sent through the CHP's web-based "E-Flu" system, which also provides the CHP with a quick and efficient way to categorize and analyze the disease data received.

Probable Ban on Live Poultry from Guangdong

14. (SBU) Eddie Chan said that as soon as the patient is officially confirmed as an H5N1 case by the mainland Ministry of Health, the HKG would "probably" ban imports of live poultry from Guangdong Province. Chan said that the patient's supposed frequent visits to wet markets constitute prima facie evidence that there is a poultry link for this case, thus forcing the HKG to "play it safe" with live poultry imports. Chan continued that Shenzhen health authorities are investigating wet markets and also keeping a close watch on other truck drivers, even though the patient is not a resident of Shenzhen.

15. This cable has been cleared by U.S. Consulate General Guangzhou.

CUNNINGHAM